

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 30B
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

As Jesus enters Jerusalem for the last time, He wept as He grieved over Jerusalem because of her unbelief and rejection of Him. He knew that the people will clamour to have him crucified. These whom He came to save will reject and crucify Him. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple manifests His love for the honour and glory of His Father in heaven. Jesus' welcoming of the blind and the lame into the Temple reveals his gentle nature. We will learn that there is a need to be true to our profession of faith in Him as Christ was to His Heavenly Father. The Jewish authorities professed faith in Jehovah but had degenerated into hypocrisy, having the form but not the substance of godliness. Jesus reminds us of the importance of bearing genuine fruits. The tree that will not bear fruit will be discarded. True authority lies not in the name or the title of the person. True authority lies only in God and with God. The true servant of God has to learn humility and realize that he has no authority outside of the Word of God that he preaches. Hence his authority is

derived from the Scriptures. Outside of the Bible he has no authority at all. Prayer is a precious gift given to the believer by God that has been untapped. We pray perfunctory prayers making ritual the norm in our quiet time and prayer life. Time spent with the LORD becomes tasteless. Soon we stop praying altogether and our walk with God grows cold. This is not the abundant life that Christ promised us. This life is obtained and maintained by prayer. These are some of the precious lessons we can learn.

OUTLINE

1. Healing in the Temple (Matthew 21:14-17; Mark 11:19)
2. Death of the Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26; Matthew 21:20-22)
3. The Authority of Christ Challenged (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8)

COMMENTARY

Healing in the Temple

The profiteers had been driven out of the Temple. Instead of being ostracized, the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the Temple. The authorities have forbidden the lame, blind, deaf, or those who were handicapped in one way or another from offering their sacrifices in the Temple. But Jesus welcomed them. They were a needy people. Jesus always had time and compassion for the blind and lame.

Jesus healed all who came to Him in faith. True religion is more than just coming to the Temple with their offerings. It has to do with the healing of the soul. It has everything to do with making the person whole. What a picture of infinite beauty and tenderness. The Christian must also realize that true religion is more than just offering some sacrifices (be it time, talents, or tithe) but it is a changed life in relation to the inner man and to others. Micah 6:8 sums it up well, "*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*"

The children in the Temple cried out to Jesus: "Hosanna to the Son of David." The adults had shouted the same phrase outside. They had stopped saying it in the Temple because the priests and the Pharisees were displeased. But the children were not inhibited or intimidated by these "big shots". These innocent little ones were praising Jesus. The priests and the scribes were deeply indignant about what these children did. They complained to Jesus. But Jesus replied them by quoting a portion from Psalm 8: *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise* (v.2). This provided the scriptural basis for Jesus not to silence the children as suggested by the priests and scribes. In addition the praise in the Psalm was directed to God. Jesus claimed deity. That Jesus quoted from the Psalm also reminded those who heard Him that they must be

willing to become like children who perceive the truth about Him and be saved. Night fell and Jesus again retreated to Bethany where He spent the night.

We have to be like a child when it comes to our salvation. Here the LORD says that we also need to be like a child when it comes to worship and praise. Childlike faith is necessary for both. What is a child like faith?

Death of the Fig Tree

The next morning, Tuesday, Jesus once again made His way to Jerusalem. Passing by the fig-tree which He had cursed the day before, the disciples saw and marvelled at it. Peter pointed out the fact to Jesus. It sparked a series of teachings by Jesus to His disciples. Jesus first taught them that if they had faith in the power of God, they could say to "this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," and it would be done.

Jesus once again emphasized the power of God. Jesus' disciples understood what Jesus meant. They understood that there was no use at all to ask for a mountain to be removed to the sea. But they understood the expression to mean that nothing is impossible with God. What is required of the petitioner is implicit faith. In connection with the power of God, Jesus taught them how the prayer of faith in God could be effective. Jesus declared: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Prayer must be borne by a believing heart. It is moving the arm of the Almighty God. It must also be supported by a spirit of forgiveness. If there is any one whom he thinks has done him wrong, he should forgive such a person, and not be unforgiving. Genuine forgiveness will automatically result in reconciliation. Otherwise God the Father in heaven will not forgive his trespasses. In other words, if one does not forgive, his own sins will not be forgiven by the Father in heaven. That being the case his prayer will not be heard and will be ineffective (cf. Psalm 66:18).

The Authority of Christ Challenged

As Jesus was walking in the Temple, He came to that part where debates were often held. Jesus began teaching the people. This afforded the priests, the scribes and the elders of the people the golden opportunity to ask Jesus questions. All this while, they were trying to trap Jesus so that they could accuse Him of blasphemy or wrong doing. Their evil intention was to arrest Him and kill Him. The priests, the scribes and the elders of the people said to Jesus: "Tell us: by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?" The answer they required of Jesus was twofold: what authority and who gave Him that authority. They asked for the nature and the source of His authority.

The question they posed to Jesus had been well thought through. If Jesus answered that His authority was from

God, He would be charged with blasphemy for they had rejected Jesus' claim to deity. If Jesus claimed secular authority for His act of cleansing the Temple, the charge would be insurrection. They were confident that they had Jesus cornered. There was no way Jesus could escape them this time. Either answer from the LORD would result in either arrest and or condemnation. It was a very subtle trap. Their question was borne out of deep hatred for Jesus who threatened their position and privilege in the community. The chief priests hated Jesus because Jesus exposed their unethical economic practices. The scribes had been embarrassed by Jesus countless times. The elders of the people were repudiated by Jesus for holding the traditions of men above the Law of God. Their question on the surface looks legitimate and spiritual. But their motive was evil. Jesus was aware of their evil thoughts and schemes.

Jesus was not easily tricked by them. They had tried so many times to trap Him. This was their final attempt. Jesus took their question at face value. He acknowledged their question — it was a good question. However, this time Jesus did not answer their question directly. Instead Jesus countered with His own question. Jesus promised to oblige them if they could answer his question. Then Jesus asked: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" Jesus was baptized by John. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people regrouped

themselves to discuss the question. They reasoned among themselves. If they say that it was from heaven, they knew that Jesus would say to them: "Why did ye not then believe in him?" If they answer that it was of men, they fear that the people might stone them for they all regarded John as a prophet from God. They then turned to Jesus and said, "We cannot tell whence it was."

They very well knew the answer. Instead of conceding defeat and answering that John's baptism was from heaven, they retreated behind the false confession: "We can not tell whence it was." Their answer was a lie. They were not humble and sincere. So Jesus refused to answer their question. If we examine Jesus' question to the Jewish authority very carefully, Jesus did claim divine authority. The only human authority Jesus could claim then was John the Baptist. All the people regarded John's witness was from heaven and likewise Jesus' for John had testified of Him. The Jewish rulers were completely floored.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Many spiritual truths can be learnt from these encounters of our Lord Jesus Christ with the people. There is much tenderness and beauty in Jesus as He made His entrance into Jerusalem for the last time before His death. As He made His way from the Mount of Olives, and overlooking the Temple, He wept over Jerusalem, the holy city of God. There stood God's Temple, the temple

of His Father in heaven. It grieved His heart. While Jesus had come to save the nation Israel, they would not accept him. Jesus pronounced the first judgement against the nation of Israel. Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people therein. This judgement of Israel was emphasized again when Jesus cursed the fig-tree. The fig-tree symbolized the nation Israel. It had failed as a nation to bring deliverance and hope to all the other nations. Jesus teaches that hypocrisy is more than what a person is not. It is failing to produce what is promised. If our spiritual lifestyle promises great expectations, but fails to produce what is promised, this is hypocrisy. Our religion is false. We must be careful not to "mistake spiritual style for spiritual substance."

Jesus always had time for the outcasts in a community. Jesus cared for those in need like the blind, the lame and the widowed. We must be like our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be strong in doctrine and teaching, and that is necessary. But we must also match our zeal for the word with the care for the needy, especially those of the household of faith. Preaching the Word, and teaching the Word, and care and concern for the social and physical needs of the needy are three major missions of the church.

In the cleansing of the Temple, we too must be very careful that we do not turn God's church into a place of convenience or into a club house or

community centre for fellowship. The physical building is for the enhancement of the Christian's walk with God. It is meant for fellowship and made conducive for worship and service. The church (body of believers) belongs to Jesus because He bought us with His precious blood. We must constantly guard against the encroachment of materialism and Epicureanism. We must be aware of the church's sacred missions (to preach the gospel and to defend the faith), and to fulfill them for Christ's sake and glory.

Finally, the teaching on prayer can never be overstated. Prayer is a very important part of Christian life. If we want God to hear our prayers we must exercise complete faith in God. We must also have a forgiving spirit towards our others who have wronged us.
AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

this child like faith, all other faith is false, do you agree?

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Matthew 21:14-17; Mark 11:19

TUESDAY: Matthew 21:14-17; Mark 11:19

WEDNESDAY: Mark 11:20-26; Matthew 21:20-22

THURSDAY: Mark 11:20-26; Matthew 21:20-22

FRIDAY: Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8

3. What other factors relating to prayer did Jesus mention apart from the prayer of faith?

Discussion Questions

1. Is it possible for us to turn the church into a den of thieves, today? Explain your answer in light of Calvary Pandan.

4. Does Jesus really mean "all things" in Matthew 21:22 or is it a qualified "all things"?

2. What does it mean to have child like faith? Is this the only kind of faith a believer ought to have? Outside of

5. In what way do Christians doubt their own prayer? Cite some examples.

6. Why did Jesus refuse to answer the Jewish leaders directly? What was the lesson Jesus tried to send across by this manner of reply?
